

MANAS

Speaks

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‘Mental Health in an Unequal World’

#WorldMentalHealthDay

MENTAL HEALTH

Childhood sacrificed pandemic

Growing up too fast: early menarche and mental illness

Adolescent mental health

Ghost of Surfing Social Media



The Academy of Psychology



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MANAS *Speaks*

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Manas Speaks is a monthly magazine from Manas-The academy of psychology, to publish a wide range of conceptual articles relating to different perspectives on methodologies in psychological research and to support student communities to strengthen their knowledge.

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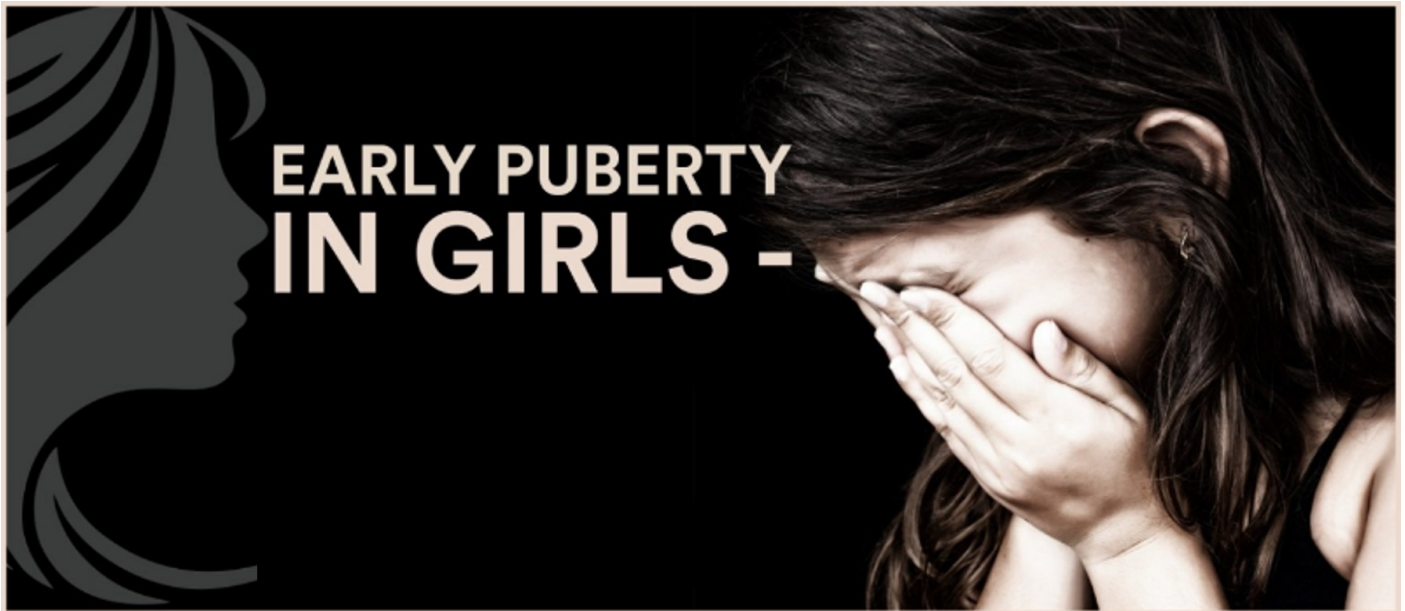
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Author Guidelines

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Hey Peeps! Hope you're doing great!!!

Let's talk about Early Menarche and associated mental health issues. Wait for what!! Menarche? And it's mental health issues!

Yep! You heard it right.

Menarche is your first menstrual period, which plays a vital role in women's life. The average age of menarche is between 12 -14. But from the past 2 decades, this average age of menarche is declining and has become very common. So this is what we call "Early Menarche". In more layman terms appearance of menstruation before age 10. Quite shocking right!

Hey girl!! If you are one among them, I can understand how you might have felt at the time. It might be tough for you to understand what's happening with you then and its associated consequences. What??? Yeah, there are a lot many reasons and consequences of early menarche which you have to deal with. Let's understand this in detail better

So, they are several reasons behind early menarche some of them are our Diet, Genes and also the BMI (Body Mass Index). When talk-

ing about diet, it has a huge impact on the menarche as well the age. High consumption of dairy products, high amounts of sugar intake, junk and processed foods impede with the development. The timing of your period could also depend upon your GENES. There are many considerable pieces of evidences that, there is a strong correlation between the menarcheal age of girls and their mothers. There are several studies conducted that have shown an association between higher childhood BMI and early puberty. When girls are obese or have a high BMI at the pre-pubertal age (5-9) this excess body fat can alter the hormonal levels and also a low amount of physical activity may decrease melatonin levels which triggers early menarche.

On the other hand, the consequences i.e., the associated mental health issues. This is quite interesting!! The transformation of people who begin puberty earlier than their peers especially for girls is quite fraught. It's a big yaaas!! because you don't even know what's happening and can't even understand the bodily changes. Hmm, tough task though!!

Understanding the risks associated with early maturation is quite complex and complicated.

You may knowingly or unknowingly undergo various emotional and behavioural issues. The few obvious issues you know are Depression, Stress and Anxiety. Of course, you are right! Comparative to those individuals whose age of menarche is above 12 or 13, early menstruating girls experience high amounts of depression, stress and anxiety.

Many research studies have stated that early menstruating girls are at increased risk of psychosocial problems including depression, substance abuse and early sexual behaviour. Okay! I'm not being judgmental. Not everyone exhibits the same behaviour. So, it has been linked with internalizing symptoms (e.g. Anxiety) and externalizing symptoms (e.g. Substance abuse). Along with these disorders among adolescent girls, early puberty is also associated with aggression, eating disorders and disruptive behaviour disorders.

Social determinants are also highly influential. The families, peers and communities children grow up in can provide "social scaffolds" for their mental health. I think you know the term peer pressure. Of course, you know and might have faced or at times might have struggled to say no to your friends. Right! So, here in early adolescence, these individuals might experience negative peer pressure as they often hang out with older pals who en-

gage in risky behaviours. This sought of peer pressure is known as Best friend deviant behaviour.

Let's talk about some of the ways that help you prevent this from happening for time being!

As a matter of fact, apart from all these disorders you also go through many problems like menstrual cramps, mood swings could also be

PMS (Pre Menstrual Syndrome), aches, acne, irregular periods, fatigue, insomnia, dizziness, at times you might also feel like not moving an inch, increased food cravings etc. **So what should be done to prevent it!!**

◆ Children should be taught about menstrual health, menstrual hygiene and also about reproductive health.

- ◆ Maintain a healthy diet.
- ◆ Lifestyle changes are necessary.
- ◆ Physical activity- outdoor games, workouts, cycling, walking, and yoga would really help.
- ◆ Maintain healthy BMI
- ◆ Open communication would help the child freely share their concerns, which helps in reducing stress. This would also allow you to educate them about their bodies and also their functions.

Yamuna Nandivada

